

and there continue to be individuals and groups who would use our voting system to deliberately minimize the rights of minority voters. Congress should act to revitalize the Voting Rights Act.

Protecting the right to vote also extends to restoring the rights of nearly 4 million Americans across the country who have been released from prison but barred from the voting booth, often for life. I have been leading the fight for the Democracy Restoration Act, which would restore voting rights to individuals after they have served their time and have been released from incarceration.

If we truly want to break the cycle of recidivism, we need to reintegrate former prisoners back into society. When prisoners are released, they are expected to obey the law, get a job, and pay taxes as they are rehabilitated and reintegrated into their community. With these responsibilities and obligations of citizenship should also come the rights of citizenship, including the right to vote.

The current patchwork of State laws results in the lack of a uniform standard for eligibility to vote in Federal elections.

I believe that Congress should take strong action now to remedy this problem and enact a nationwide standard for restoration of voting rights. That is why I have introduced the Democracy Restoration Act.

As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, let us continue the march for justice for all Americans. I urge Congress to address the issues of voting rights and racial profiling during this session.

CENTENNIAL OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, yesterday marked the centennial of the U.S. Navy Reserve, an indispensable and valuable part of our Armed Forces. The Navy Reserve was established as the Naval Reserve on March 3, 1915, and since then sailors have served in every conflict from World War I to the present. In addition, five U.S. Presidents: John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and George H.W. Bush have all served honorably in the Navy Reserve.

Today, we have more than 2,000 Navy Reserve sailors deployed around the world and our country is extremely grateful for the contributions and sacrifices that these sailors have made and continue to make to the history of the United States.

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL GRABOWSKI

One of those sailors I would like to talk about today is LT Michael Grabowski from Norwalk, CT. Lieutenant Grabowski is a perfect example of the student-citizen-soldier who wears two uniforms, one protecting the people of my State and the other honorably protecting our soldiers overseas. As a civilian, Lieutenant Grabowski

serves in the Connecticut State Police and is one of six servicemembers of the Connecticut State Police currently mobilized by our Armed Forces. In addition, he is a first-year law student at Quinnipiac University. Michael is currently mobilized to Qatar supporting Operation Enduring Freedom as a master of arms in the Navy. Michael is a fine example of the courage and sacrifice that citizens of Connecticut and all across the country have made to protect our freedoms.

Today we celebrate Michael and every sailor and their families' commitment and service; and encourage all Americans to seize the opportunity to honor and support these brave men and women.

ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks to the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Our nation is home to the world's greatest system of colleges and universities. From the beginning, federal policy has been to give grants and loans to students and let them choose from among all types of institutions—public four-year universities, community colleges, for-profit colleges, and private non-profits.

For example, students can study automobile technology at Nashville's auto diesel school or forensic psychology at Argosy University or computer information systems at DeVry University.

Student choice and competition are the drivers of American higher education's success. And an important participant in American higher education has always been our for-profit colleges and universities.

The students served by for-profit colleges underscore their importance. Nearly 2,100 institutions educate 3.3 million students representing, approximately 12 percent of all college enrollments, 1.8 million Pell students and 1.9 million federal loan borrowers. More than half of enrollments are students of color. Fifty percent of students are juggling school with children. More than a third of these students are working full-time while going to school. For-profits accounted for 44 percent of certificates, 20 percent of two-year associate's degrees and 7 percent of bachelor's degrees granted in the United States in 2012.

The President along with many governors and state legislatures are setting goals to increase the number of citizens with college degrees or certificates. Governor Haslam in Tennessee has an ambitious goal called Drive to 55, to see 55 percent of Tennesseans with degrees or certificates by 2025. The president has called for America to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020.

The only way to achieve these goals is to include all sectors of higher education, including for-profit colleges and universities. Yet this administration has taken aim at the for-profit sector, and has created regulations specifically targeting your colleges and universities.

My view is that our policies should equally apply to all institutions of higher education, no matter the sector. There are bad apples in the for-profit sector—but there are bad apples in every sector of higher education.

So let me begin to describe my priorities for all sectors of higher education, which includes your colleges and universities:

- 1) Make it easier for students to go to college (FAST Act)
- 2) Make it simpler for colleges and universities to educate (Task Force on Regulation)
- 3) Make sure that accreditation ensures quality (Accreditation)
- 4) Make it harder to overborrow (FAST Act, Skin in the Game)
- 5) Make sure colleges are collecting useful data for students, families and policymakers (Consumer Data)

These are my priorities as we work over the next few months to reauthorize this law and ensure that 20 years from now, our colleges and universities still remain the best in the world in the quality of education they provide.

Number one, make it simpler for colleges and universities to educate. Today we have a government form so complicated and confusing that it discourages as many as 2 million Americans from attending college each year. This is the dreaded FAFSA—the Free Application for Federal Student Aid—which consists of 108 questions on topics ranging from your spouse's federal tax exemptions to the net worth of your parents' investment farms.

I have joined with a bipartisan group of senators to introduce legislation that would simplify the FAFSA form to just two questions—1) What was your household income two years ago? 2) What is your family size?

Four experts before our committee testified that these two questions would provide about 95 percent of all the information the federal government needs to determine award amounts.

It would also make the process, as much as the questions, less intimidating for parents. Because our bill would ask for household income from two years ago—as opposed to last year's income—it would restore sanity to the parents of applicants who are often being asked to provide the government with their income totals before they've even received their W-2s for the year.

One mentor with Governor Haslam's Tennessee Promise program, a woman named Cathy Hammon, says the form has a “chilling effect”—intimidating parents who may themselves never have attended college, and have no experience navigating the process. She says this: “It's the very youth we worry about the most that struggle with it.”

The FAST Act would also restore year-round Pell availability. This gives students common-sense flexibility. According to a study by New America, under today's Pell schedule: “If a student attends a college that treats the summer as the start of the year, receives Pell Grants as a full-time student in that summer, and then attends full-time in the fall, she will not have enough aid to attend full-time in the spring.” That doesn't make sense and it doesn't help students. So our proposal would let them use Pell all year.

Number two, make it simpler for colleges and universities to educate.

Over a year ago, Vanderbilt University hired the Boston Consulting Group to determine how much it costs the university to comply with federal rules and regulations. The answer: \$150 million, or 11 percent of the university's total non-hospital expenditures last year. Vanderbilt Chancellor Nick Zeppos says that this adds about \$11,000 in additional tuition per year for each of the university's 12,757 students.

The Higher Education Act totals nearly 1,000 pages; there are over 1,000 pages in the official Code of Federal Regulations devoted to higher education; and on average every workday the Department of Education issues one new sub-regulatory guidance directive or clarification. No one has taken the time to “weed the garden.”

The result of this piling up of regulations is that one of the greatest obstacles to innovation and cost consciousness in higher education has become—us, the federal government.

A conspicuous example of this is the Gainful Employment regulation. It's a perfect symbol of what's wrong with our regulatory process that the Administration needed nearly 945 pages to define a two-word phrase that has been in the higher education law in one form or another since 1965.

What's especially concerning about the regulation is—

First, the rule is designed to almost exclusively impact and penalize for-profit colleges and universities. It selectively ignores concerns about student loan debt levels across all sectors of higher education.

The Department of Education's own National Center for Education Statistics reports that 26% of graduates from public, four-year colleges and 39% of graduates from private, four-year colleges would not be considered “gainfully employed” using the Department's metrics. It seems ridiculous that this regulation could shut down a nursing program at a for-profit institution but not one in exactly the same circumstances at a non-profit or public institution.

Second, the rule's complex debt-to-income ratios over-emphasize a graduate's income right after college. This is especially shortsighted for educational programs that hold an important public benefit such as education or social work, but don't result in early-career, high-paying salaries.

Third, this regulation has nothing to do with the quality of the education being provided. It simply relies on arbitrary government definitions of affordable student loan debt. What would be the result? More than 800,000 students will be kicked out of their programs at a time when many public colleges are unable to accommodate more students.

This simply isn't a good regulation and I think the Administration knows I'll do what it takes to oppose it. I've cosponsored legislation by Richard Burr and Virginia Foxx to overturn the gainful employment regulation, and other regulations that are equally ill advised. I led a letter signed by several of my colleagues opposing the proposed regulations, and I am prepared to offer an amendment to restrict funds from being used to implement the rule. As we approach the rewrite of the Higher Education Act, I intend to do what I can to prohibit the Department from implementing this regulation and treat all institutions equally.

This is just one example of regulatory excess.

And when it comes to bad regulations, let me make clear: we cannot just blame President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan. They have contributed to the problem, but so has every president and every education secretary—and that includes me—since 1965 when the first Higher Education Act was enacted.

More than a year ago, four members of the Senate education committee—two Democrats and two Republicans—asked a group of distinguished educators to examine the current state of federal rules and regulations for colleges and universities. We asked them not just to tell us the problem, but to give us specific solutions.

They last month sent to us, “Recalibrating Regulation of Colleges and Universities,” a

remarkable report in which they outline 59 specific regulations, requirements and areas for Congress and the Department of Education to consider—listing 10 especially problematic regulations. In their own words, America's 6,000 colleges and universities live in a “jungle of red tape” that is expensive and confusing and unnecessary.

So with this reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Ranking Member Murray and I will work on a process that takes full advantage of the recommendations in this report so we can include many of them in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

But the bottom line is that regulations are taking good money away from educating students and performing research and all sorts of other things colleges and universities ought to be doing.

We won't let that happen again with this reauthorization.

Number three, make sure that accreditation ensures quality.

Our higher education system today is governed by what's known as the “triad”:

The federal government, which ensures that colleges and universities have the fiscal and administrative capability to participate in federal aid programs.

The state governments—governor, legislature, state boards of education—that authorize institutions of higher education, oversee public institutions, and provide substantial public funding.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is the accreditation system.

The system also has one other major check, the student consumer—who is able to choose from over 6,000 colleges and universities, and ideally is unlikely to waste their time and money on a worthless degree. When it comes to ensuring academic quality—the choice is this: Either we have Washington regulate our over 6,000 colleges and universities, or we let them self-regulate through accreditation. I much prefer accreditation.

That does not mean our system of accreditation is problem-free. Today, accreditors meddle in areas that are none of their business. And sometimes they're too stuffy to allow some of the innovation that needs to come in education. We need to take a hard look at the system and the role it serves for the American taxpayer.

We need to answer questions, such as:

Are accreditors focused on the right things such as student learning and quality?

Does the current structure of regional accreditation make sense in today's world when higher education is increasingly national in scope?

Are federal rules and regulations on accreditors getting in the way of their ability to assess and ensure academic quality?

But we need to keep in mind that this system is far preferable to any regulatory body created by the federal government.

Number four, make it harder for students to over-borrow.

There's a lot of discussion about student debt in the United States, but when you drill down on who's really got so much debt: It's a very small contingent of mostly graduate students. For most Americans, college is a good investment that will pay off.

Three out of four of our college students attend a public 2- or 4-year college and university. Of those, about two out of five of all students attend community colleges where the average tuition and fees are under \$3,300. Those students receive an average of \$4,850 in grants and scholarships. So the average community college student in America is receiving about \$1,500 more in grants and scholarships than what it costs in tuition and fees to attend college.

Thirty-seven percent of all of our college students attend public 4-year universities.

The average in-state tuition and fees is about \$8,900. Those students receive in average \$5,800 in grants and scholarships. We're not talking loans, so they have to pay \$3,100 on average, in tuition and fees.

And then we have students who attend 4-year colleges that are private. That's about 15 percent. Their average tuition and fees are \$30,000 but the scholarships and grants take that down to \$12,500. At for-profit colleges and universities, the average cost is about \$15,000.

About 2 percent of federal borrowers have more than \$100,000 in debt. Graduate students are typically the problem.

The FAST Act would discourage over-borrowing by limiting the amount a graduate student is able to borrow. It would also help undergraduates from borrowing too much, by limiting borrowing based on enrollment. For example, a part-time student would be able to take out a part time loan only.

In addition, my proposal would allow institutions to limit borrowing based on evidence that students completing the program have difficulty repaying their loans.

I would also like to give schools more ability to counsel students on borrowing. Many in Congress are concerned with students borrowing more than is necessary while attending college and anecdotal examples of increased institutional counseling has led to reduced borrowing by students.

I believe that the institution, especially if we give you the ability to counsel students and limit borrowing, should bear some responsibility for this borrowing—after all you are the ones charging these students. However, I am seeking your input on this topic. Some of your members, as well as the association itself, have talked with me and my staff about this topic. I hope those discussions continue.

Number five, make sure the data colleges are collecting are useful for students, families and policymakers.

Before we rewrite this law, we need to know what information consumers actually find useful as they shop for schools, how much information is too much and what is the role of the federal government.

The federal government collects thousands of data points annually on schools, yet still cannot answer some of policymakers and students basic questions. In the future, Department of Education should only collect data that is useful to consumers or to policymakers regarding how well our federal programs are working. Consumers nor policymakers are able to absorb all of the data currently collected.

This is a prime area to reduce institutional burden. So we need to determine what information is truly needed. That may mean collecting new and different data that better fulfills federal responsibilities to taxpayers and drives the free market which makes our country and higher education system number one.

It is also important to ensure that the Department is not allowed to manipulate this data to create opaque, inappropriate or contrived metrics such as recently happened with cohort default rates and gainful employment, and will more than likely occur in the forthcoming ratings system.

I look forward to the upcoming reauthorization. Senator MURRAY and I are working very well in moving a fix to No Child Left Behind and I see no reason why the Higher Education Act will be any different. I intend to move to this bill this spring after we complete Senate action on No Child Left Behind. We will hold several hearings before holding a mark-up of a reauthorization early this summer. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the process unfolds. Thank you for everything you have done to be helpful so far and for providing opportunity to those seeking a higher education.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JEFFREY SHAW

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Jeffrey Shaw on his retirement after serving Southwest Gas Corporation, Southwest Gas, for 27 years. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to a company that services thousands across Nevada.

Mr. Shaw stands as a shining example of someone who has devoted his life to serving his State and community. After earning his bachelor of science in accounting from the University of Utah, Mr. Shaw worked for Arthur Andersen & Co. in its Dallas and Las Vegas offices in the audit division. In 1988, he began his career at Southwest Gas as director of internal audit. From there, Mr. Shaw worked to move higher in the company, climbing from controller and chief accounting officer all the way to president and chief executive officer of Southwest Gas. Today, the company services over 1 million homes across the country.

Mr. Shaw is not only driven in his endeavors with Southwest Gas, but within the local Las Vegas community as well. He is a member of the Nevada Society of Certified Public Accountants and the Leadership Las Vegas Alumni Association. He also serves on the boards of the Council for a Better Nevada and the UNLV Foundation, and he is a past president and a current board member of both the Western Energy Institute and the Las Vegas Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. His work throughout these many organizations demonstrates his dedication to honorably representing Nevada on multiple fronts. Although he is retiring, his legacy within these organizations will continue for years to come.

It is not only Mr. Shaw's commitment and drive to excel that places him among the most notable in his community, but also his genuine good nature in helping others. He has served Las Vegas by contributing to higher education and the local Boy Scout community, and by working to improve the quality of life across the State. His commitment to helping those around him is unwavering.

I am very grateful for his dedication to the people of Las Vegas and to the State of Nevada. He exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and community service and should be proud of his long and meaningful career. Today, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Shaw on his retirement, and I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make Nevada a better place. I offer him my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DONALDO MCINTOSH

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Donald McIntosh on his retirement after 58 years of service

to Nevada and to the country. His hard work and dedication throughout the years is honorable.

Mr. McIntosh started his career in 1957 as a military police officer in the U.S. Army. His service extended for 3 years, protecting those in his local community, as well as his country. After serving in the Army, Mr. McIntosh then spent the rest of his career working in the transportation industry for the city of Las Vegas. In 1970, he worked as safety director for the Las Vegas Transit System and Greyline Tours and then for Transportation Unlimited. His final years of service were spent as a transportation escort for the Pahrump Senior Center.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. McIntosh for his courageous contributions to the United States of America. His service to his country and his bravery and dedication earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for after their service. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

The Las Vegas community has greatly benefitted from the hard work of Mr. McIntosh. Today, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. McIntosh on his retirement. I offer my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make the Silver State a better place and for his service to this country, and I give my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations, and a withdrawal, which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE DESIGNATION OF FUNDING FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS/GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM—PM 10

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with language under the heading "Coast Guard, Operating Expenses" of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (the "Act"), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 4, 2015.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:55 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House recedes from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 240) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, and that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the aforementioned bill.

The message also announced that pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Joint Economic Committee: Mr. DELANEY of Maryland, Ms. ADAMS of North Carolina, and Mr. BEYER of Virginia.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:14 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 240. An act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

H.R. 431. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 625. A bill to provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with